Volume XCIII No. 17 January 29, 1971 40 cents

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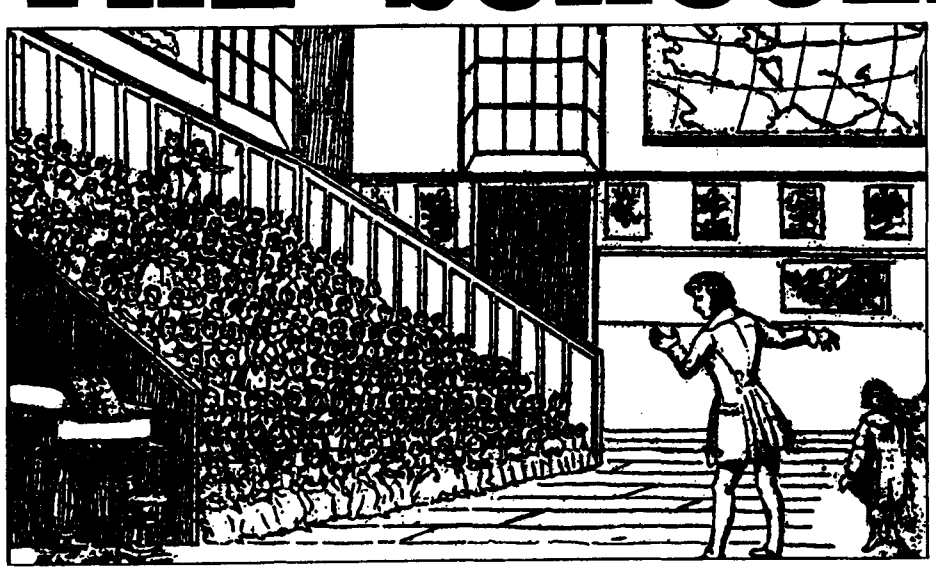
EDUCATION ISSUE:

WILL THE VOUCHER PLAN WORK?
IS THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL CRISIS REALLY A CATHOLIC PARISH CRISIS?
THE 'OPEN CLASSROOM' & ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION,
NEW VICTIMS OF THE SEARCH FOR ANSWERS?
LIVING THROUGH THE REVOLUTION AT THE M.L.A.
GETTING THE DOPE ON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
THE SILBERMAN REPORT
A SCHOOL IN THE GHETTO
PIETY IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

TRYING TO SAVE THE SCHOOLS



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NEWS & VIEWS

Now A Clergy Gap

If a new study of stress factors in clerical life is only partially accurate, the existing situation is fast becoming a desperate one.

This is a study which concludes that stress is causing one Catholic priest in four to consider resignation, and one Protestant minister in eight.

The stresses among Catholic clergy are found to center about "personal loneliness, work frustration, and the need to marry." Among Protestants, they are linked to "inadequate compensation, work frustration, and, to a small degree, family unhappiness."

The Protestant stresses are categorized as "relatively low and uncomplicated." Catholic clergymen, on the other hand, are said to show "sharp stress profiles" of "complex and manifold severity."

The conclusions are not easily dismissed, as this is no amateur or casual study. The authors are John P. Koval of Notre Dame, Father Richard Bell of Loyola of Chicago, and Edgar W. Mills of the National Council of Churches. They surveyed 8,000 Protestant clergymen, 4,600 of whom responded, and 3,000 Catholic priests, 62 percent of whom replied.

The study is especially revealing with respect to Catholics. Very few, I suspect, would have placed at 25 percent the number of Catholic priests so discontented that they are considering resignation.

Singled out as the principal stresses for Catholic clergy are "a lack of leadership from those in authority," "disappointment with the church's stand on certain moral and social issues, such as race and birth control," and "the slow pace of change after Vatican II."

Interesting. But not nearly so interesting as the study's conclusion that within the Catholic clergy there now has developed, largely as a result of these stresses, two distinct and widely separated "clergy cultures."

The cultures are seen embracing those over 50 and those under 45. The cleavage between the two groups has nothing to do with faith commitment and vocational choice; men of both cultures are judged to be firm in their career selection and in their basic belief in Christianity. The crunch comes on those other issues: leadership, reform, and the loneliness of celibate clergy life.

The sociologists see the two cultures forming a "generation gap" so sizeable and consistent "as to suggest two polarized groups somehow living within the same organizational context," but "in two separate worlds."

It's a sad and potentially tragic development, one to which those in authority must give sober reflection. Unfortunately, those in authority are frequently more adept at widening than closing clergy gaps these days, including, on occasion, the Pope himself. His recent apostolic exhortation to bishops of the world is a case in point.

No one disputes that it is well and good—indeed vital—to remind bishops on occasion of their "grave and urgent duty" to proclaim authentic Christian teaching. But in a time of particular tension, is it wise or politic to do so at the hurt of others in the clergy?

Specifically, was it wise to exhort bishops to speak out by putting in their place theologians who have spoken out? "However necessary the function of the theologians," Paul commented, "it is not to the learned that God has confided the duty of authentically interpreting the faith of the church." Zing.

Admittedly the Pope has strict tradition on his side, but the statement still cuts against the grains of friendship. (There's also an anti-intellectualism, but that's another matter.)

Admittedly too, a defense can be made for the Pope's tone, that in its full context there was no shrillness, maybe even no tendentiousness. But it is still open to misunderstanding—and if the Koval-Mills-Bell study tells anyone anything, it is that this is a bad time to be courting misunderstanding within the clergy. Very bad.

Birthright Centers

Secular emphases with respect to problem pregnancies aren't all in the direction of abortion, not with non-sectarian "Birthright" centers cropping up in city after city across North America dedicated to finding alternatives to abortion as a solution to unwanted pregnancies.

The latest of these centers, in an idea which originated in Toronto in 1968, is Birthright of Chicago. It opened Jan. 4, and eight days later it was handling 25 cases (attracted primarily through a two-line ad in the personals column of the *Chicago Tribune*).

The basic purpose of Birthright is to reach the unnerved expectant mother, and help her through the pressures that drive many alienated and confused women to seek abortions.

Its central idea is that every pregnant woman, regardless of her individual circumstances, should receive whatever assistance is necessary to allow her to bear her child despite economic hardship, mental distress or social discrimination.

Birthright centers are operating in Vancouver, Denver, Cleveland, Minneapolis, etc., as well as Chicago. In each city the procedure is similar: a well-advertised phone number is answered by a Birthright volunteer (no salaries are paid any staffers) trained to listen with sympathy and unshockability, and to assist with advice in finding a maternity home, medical care, legal and financial assistance, and adoption guidance. Consultation follows, then referrals. In Chicago the number is 233-0305.

Willson, The Observer, London

Quote of the Week

From Charles Goodell's last speech in the Senate:

"President Nixon has decided to use the threat of escalation in the air to prevent the enemy from building up its capacity to launch offensives in South Vietnam . . . It may sound impressive to speak of bombing Hanoi, mining Haiphong harbor, and destroying the rail lines to China. Yet it is worth recalling that during the entire course of the French Indochina war, the French actually controlled Hanoi, Haiphong harbor, and the China rail lines—and still the enemy was able to conduct a successful guerrilla war throughout Indochina. It is hard to conceive how bombing of these targets will succeed, where French control of them failed."

Odds and Ends

—If there's new status in being visited by the FBI, then *Commonweal's* got new status. The office was visited by two agents recently, wishing to consult subscription records. The honor was declined. A subpoena was hinted at.

—A Wilmette, Ill., pastor knows how to handle neighbors who don't like the 6:55 a.m. ringing of the church's new chimes. Says Father Leo A. Devitt: "Buy earplugs."

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

"Catechetics" or Whatever

Caney, Kansas

To the Editors: One suspects that Gabriel Moran's obituary for "catechetics" [Dec. 18] bears a greater relationship to his previous comments questioning the future of catechetics than to any profound analysis of our language code.

Further, it appears that Moran is playing some kind of semantic game. In my experience "religious education" and "catechetics" are now used interchangeably to signify the interdisciplinary educational approach which aims to provide an environment conducive to cognitive, affective and behavioral development vis-á-vis faith affirmations. I find it difficult, also, to tag any term, "catechetics" for example, as irretrievably intramural in these days of crumbling walls.

Another observation: To say that when religion courses are improved they gradually come to look like something other than religion implies either that the "traditional" religion courses represented the eternal paradigm of what religion courses should be, or, indeed, that religion courses must meet certain specific *a priori* contours.

When Moran writes about theology, I find him stimulating and even absorbing; when he writes about "religious education," "catechetics," or whatever you want to call it, I find him highly ambiguous (but never dull). Perhaps this can be attributed to: 1) my uncommon obtuseness, 2) his inability to fashion a nexus between his theology and his educational philosophy, 3) the built-in ambiguity of educational terminology, 4) all of these factors or, 5) none of these. What the answer is, I don't know; as a teacher all I do is pose questions.

(REV.) LEON MCKENZIE

REPLY: It is true that no one can prove that a word is beyond salvage. However, in a fairly wide circle of con-

(Continued on page 431)

NEWS & VIEWS: 410 **CORRESPONDENCE: 411**
EDITORIALS: 411
LIVING THROUGH THE REVOLUTION: *Doris Grumbach* **412**
THE TROUBLE WITH VOUCHERS: *Maurice R. Berube* **414**
SCHOOL CRISIS—OR PARISH CRISIS?: *George Elford* **418**
THE STATISTICS OF CRISIS: *Joseph McLellan* **421**
BOOKS: 424

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COMMONWEAL *A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts.*
Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y.
Printed in the USA and published weekly,
except biweekly Christmas-New Year's and June to mid-September,
by Commonweal Publishing Co., 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016
MUrray Hill 3-2042. *Copyright © 1971 Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc.*
US and Canada, $12 a year. Foreign $14. Single copies 40¢

SCHOOL AND PARISH

To a large extent, the structure of the traditional American Catholic parish, *qua* parish, has been relatively little affected by the rushing winds of the Second Vatican Council. True, liturgical reform has sharply altered the pattern of Sunday Mass, with what will hopefully be good long-range effects, and parish councils are proliferating around the country. But the pattern of the average parish remains essentially unchanged, and perhaps that was inevitable. Vatican II had much to say about liturgy, about ecumenism, about social action, about biblical renewal, but it had little directly to say about the parish unless one counts in this category a banal statement on education. This lack, we suspect, was to a large extent due to the fact that there simply has not yet been enough creative thinking and writing on the subject of the parish—not enough, at any rate, to prepare the ground for wholesale change in traditional ways of doing things.

In any case, the American parish in 1970 is not so different from the pre-conciliar parish of 1960—or of 1950 or 1940 or 1930, as far as that goes. For the typical non-rural parish, at least, the distinguishing mark is still the parochial school—or at least it has been until now, when every day seems to bring news of still more school closings. In one sense the present state of affairs looks like one defeat after another, as Catholic schools shut down all over the country, yet it is no secret that many Catholic "liberals" or progressives have precisely the opposite reaction: Mary Perkins Ryan spoke for many a few years ago when she asked in her book title if parochial schools were truly the answer. Why should this be so? Why should so many people sincerely dedicated to the welfare of the church in this country have such grave doubts about Catholic elementary schools? This is not the place to attempt a thorough-going summary of arguments for alternatives to the present system of Catholic elementary education, if only for reasons of space, but one thing is worth emphasizing here: the genuine concern felt by critics of the Catholic school with the quality of life in a typical parish, and the extent to which this concern helps to determine their views on the Catholic school; in this connection we recommend careful attention to the kind of question raised by Father George Elford elsewhere in this issue.

The basic outline of the typical parish as we have inherited it is plain. A school was thought to be essential, in many cases being built before the church, and this in turn mandated large parishes, since a small parish could not support a school. In the same way, bishops and pastors were

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forced, willy nilly, to be businessmen if they were to be successful at operating these plants. Given this situation, it was almost inevitable that the school should become the center of parish life and often almost the parish's only excuse for existing beyond a few hours on Sunday morning. Today there are parishes which spend as much as 80 percent of their total income on the school, to say nothing about psychic energy and attention. All too often, the existence of the school determines policy. Most would agree, for instance, that we would be better off with smaller parishes, but the investment in school buildings makes breaking up a parish difficult or impossible.

If American Catholics have failed to have a truly significant spiritual impact on American life, as few would deny, surely our long-term preoccupation with the parochial school must be considered as a possible part of the reason. The community that is the parish should not be regarded as an end in itself, as tends to be the case when most parochial money and energy go into the school. With the altar as its center, the parish's efforts should be to spread God's kingdom within its territorial limits in a host of ways, from interracial work to ecumenism, from concern with the aged to identification with the poor. Has the presence of the parochial school advanced or hindered this vision of the parish? If many zealous Catholics are "prejudiced" against the parochial school, it is in part because they see the school as a distracting force that militates against a truly dynamic conception of the parish. The case should not be oversimplified. There is something to be said on the other side of the case, arguments for the continuation of the parochial school, and we should be open in considering them. At the same time, however, those who make these arguments must show in word and deed that they see the parish as something more than an appendage to the supposedly indispensable school.

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Living Through The Revolution

Everyone by now has heard of the wife of the famous biologist Garrett Hardin who, in the last days of 1970, attending the American Association for the Advancement of Science convention in Chicago with her husband, jabbed a knitting needle into the arm of an unmannerly young member of the Science for the People movement. She drew one spot of blood, but her action had greater theoretical than physical importance; for the AAAS, ordinarily a sedate, serene, self-effacing scholarly organization, was visited last month by the strong activist group that has formed itself around the edges of American scholarly societies, this year (at the AAAS convention) moving into a central, highly audible and vocal position.

Very angry partisans have, in the past three years, become especially articulate at these annual meetings traditionally held after the Christmas peace and before the New Year. Their tactics have been to inject demanding notes of political and social insistence at every turn. "They're not here to educate us; we're here to educate *them,*" one young radical graduate student said of the 6,000 scientists at the meeting. Others said they wanted "to liberate science from capitalist control," as they disrupted the seminar on Crime, Violence and Social Control.

What are the prospects for changing permanently the historically uninvolved, restrained and politically uncommitted condition of scholarly societies like the American Historical Association, the American Philosophical Society, the AAAS, and the Modern Language Association? At this point in American social history it is hard to know. Certainly their Olympian unconcern in its original state will not return, and if the history of MLA's broken intellectual center in the last three years is illustrative and instructive, it might be worth reviewing its curious recent biography, its tentative plunge into, and then seeming retreat from, political activism.

Readers of these pages will perhaps recall [*Commonweal,* 1/31/69, 1/30/70] the rebellion two years ago at the MLA convention, where thousands of college teachers of English and foreign languages come together to discuss such erudite subjects as "Spiritual Confusion and Artistic Form in Victorian Poetry" and "Love and Madness in Twelfth Century Provençal Lyric Poetry." In 1968 a political activist, Louis Kamp of M.I.T., was elected to the vice-presidency from the floor of the business meeting, and resolutions on the draft and the Vietnamese war launched the Association into the arena of political statement. Last year in Denver (the usual Chicago gathering was deflected by dissidents with Daley-long memories) the activists held their own at a meeting much diminished in attendance by the change in location as well as by the dismay of older members at the actions of the 1968 meeting.

This year's four-day meeting in New York may well be an object lesson in what other societies like AAAS, more recently involved with the demands of young radicals in their disciplines, can expect next year and the year after that. For it was clear from the very first minutes of the convention that the issues raised in 1968 and in 1969 had run their course. Purposely, the first two days were devoted almost entirely to "the causes." But this year there was no evidence that the old causes were alive and well. Opposition to the war, racial justice, the anti-draft, the rights and needs of the poor, all these had no very visible supporters, hirsute, young angry men and women, covered with buttons and beads,

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untied at the neck, red in the face with righteous indignation. Instead there were symposia and meetings and caucuses on A New Cause: women, and their status in the profession. A dramatic announcement was made that left-wing New University Conference leader and feminist Florence Howe, assistant professor of English at Goucher, had been nominated by petition and then elected to the vice-presidency, and eventual, presidency, of the MLA. Another sign of the time was the establishment of a Day Care facility for children of members attending the convention. And the only lively and well attended table at the Hilton Hotel was that of the Commission on the Status of Women in the Profession. There one could pick up reading lists for courses on Woman in Society, Literature, History, etc., as well as lists of colleges where "women's studies" are now being taught and yes, old buttons saying "No Chicago" which no one at the convention seemed to be buying. The idea of Chicago for next year's meetings no longer repelled anyone, it would seem.

Attendance at these sex-dominating-as-subject-matter meetings was heavily women, only moderate in general, worrying the officials who predicted a great falloff for the meetings as a whole. But on the third day, and first day of serious scholarship, registration picked up a little, and the members settled down to listening to papers on "Syncope and old Icelandic i-Umlaut," "Metrics and Morphophonemics," and "Chaucer and Friar Robert Holcot on Marriage."

By now the tone heard in the rooms and corridors of the Americana and the Hilton had taken on the color of dour economic foreboding. It became soberingly apparent that few department chairmen had jobs to offer young Ph.D.'s, that the number of interviews for jobs was far lower than it had been for years, and that vacancies in English and foreign-language teaching were almost as rare as truffles and saffron. Budget cuts, the steady decline of federal, state and private funds for research and fellowships: these hollow sounds of academic recession sounded everywhere in the garish ballrooms of the great hotels.

Two things sobered the raggle-taggle, hellbent-for-election mood of the 1968, 1969 meetings: the noticeable fall-off in membership—executive secretary John Fisher reported to the business meeting that MLA had lost 4,000 of its older members, gained some student memberships—and the frightening economic chill that has hit the college-teaching profession. Nor was anyone at the meeting optimistic about the future. There were isolated but nonetheless somewhat ominous stories of firings of persons involved in political actions on campuses, whenever faculty had to be let go for budget reasons. NUC claims it has many such instances which AAUP, the profession's court of last resort on such matters, has no time to investigate (it has over 400 cases of firing for various reasons before it now).

So teachers glanced at leaflets about "Ideology and Literature" and "Radical Caucuses" and dropped them quickly on the nearest chair. Instead they listened intently to outgoing president Maynard Mack's humanistic and moderate discussion of the plight of his profession, and his moving defense of its need to be. College professors must "rebuild the world where promises are kept," he said, must keep the faith entrusted to them, in the language, in its literature: the student they fail to make aware of the importance and value of these things "is disadvantaged indeed."

The NUC people wanted the convention's business meeting to pass a motion endorsing a People's Peace Treaty with the people of Vietnam, but the determined opposition held off action on the motion by voting to send it to the total membership for a vote. It was as close to a political move as the solemnized MLA came this year; two years ago at the runaway meeting it would have passed on the floor.

The palace revolution would seem to have exhausted itself, although it is hard to know if the future presidencies of involved activists Louis Kamp (in 1971) and Florence Howe (1973) will affect the general course of affairs in the Association. Now down 4,000 members, there is evidence that MLA will be smaller, more politically restrained, less easily swayed by floor rhetoric (a delegate assembly of 280 persons will replace the now-rowdy business meetings and presumably better represent the interests of the 29,000 members), by buttons, leaflets, better prepared politically for the savvy and political know-how of the left.

It would be brash to say that MLA has had its baptism by radical fire and has moved back permanently into its old scholarly huddles, but signs are that, like students on campuses in this year, instructors and professors too are suffering from battle fatigue, are wearied by the ineffectivenss of last year's frantic action, and perhaps discouraged by what Kingman Brewster of Yale has called "monumental scorn" for the current state of things. Most of all they seem frightened by the economic sword that sways over their collective and individual noggins.

MLA seems now to be settling back to its original concerns: the promotion of scholarship, the concern for furthering employment in literary academe. No doubt it will never again be as oblivious to the demands of the outside world. For two years (and other societies may well take note of this progress) the vilified enemy was the national Administration, the university's administration, J. Edgar Hoover, the Establishment. Now, the enemy to the scholarly calm is seen as closer to home and requiring direct internecine action. In Pogo's immortal dictum: "we have met the enemy, and he is us."

DORIS GRUMBACH

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THE TROUBLE WITH VOUCHERS

DESPITE SOME ATTRACTIVE IDEAS, THE VOUCHER PLAN IS RIGGED TO FAIL . . . IT IS BASED ON A REMARKABLY NAIVE ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL POLITICS.

MAURICE R. BERUBE

There have only been three basic reforms of large public school systems in the last decade capable of significantly improving public education. Two of these have already faltered and indications are that the third has already been programmed for failure. The first—metropolitanism—is basically urban school integration made politically feasible through combining the suburbs with the city; a strategy which has been successfully resisted wherever tried. The second—community control—has, essentially, a black urban poor determining educational policy; community control suffered a near-fatal setback in New York City in a confrontation with school professionals, particularly a white conservative union. The third—the concept of educational vouchers—consists of parents "buying" the education of their choice and will soon be tried. So far, however, the voucher plan appears destined for the same political fate.

The voucher plan is deceptively simple. It is Adam Smith capitalism in the public schools: the federal government would give parents money (vouchers) and they would send their children to the school of their choice, either public, private, or parochial, in an open competitive school market. This educational market would force ineffective schools, like bad businesses, out of existence on the theory that parent consumers would flock to successful schools. And according to voucher theorists, the school market would spur educational innovation so that innumerable combinations of schools could offer differing educational recipes.

Educator Christopher Jencks is the leading advocate of vouchers. A decade ago Milton Friedman, the conservative economist, proposed the voucher idea as a means of making schools financially accountable. Since then, Jencks, a moderate educational critic, has become its main proponent. In Jencks' formulation, as given in his 219-page book prepared by his Center for the Study of Public Policy at Harvard (*Education Vouchers: A Preliminary Report on Financing Education by Payments to Parents*) the voucher model would not operate in an absolutely free market. Instead, a "regulated compensatory model" would establish a fixed school population seeking integration and "balancing" the market by endowing "slow learners" (read: children of the poor) with "supplementary education fees." An Educational Voucher Agency would regulate the experiment and would represent the educational establishment—the local board, school professionals and teacher representatives —with parents. In addition to its regulatory function the EVA would serve as a dispenser of information on schools of the parent consumers.

Much can be said for vouchers. For the plan, surely, embodies one of the most significant educational ideas of our time: that every child has different learning strengths and different learning paces. Any parent can readily observe that one child might flourish under the competition of the conventional classroom, whereas another might fare better in the more structured non-competitive atmosphere of a Montessori classroom. No two children are alike in intelligence and the ways they learn. To its credit, the educational voucher plan recognizes these differences. Under the voucher plan, theoretically, parents may choose from schools employing many educational approaches. The voucher system embodies what educator Mario Fantini has aptly called the "supermarket of ideas."

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American education is devoid of variety. Although educators pay lip service to the concept of variety in American public, private and parochial schools, this rhetoric more often than not merely constitutes an essentially misleading argument against federal control. One need only visit one urban public school and one has seen all public schools. One suspects the same holds true for private or parochial schools. Despite some inconsequential experimentation in a handful of schools, most elementary and parochial schools are uniformly dull. Charles Silberman, in his recent three-year Carnegie study, concluded after visiting many urban public schools: The standard public school takes the joy out of learning. The obvious alternative is for a plethora of educational approaches. Thus, the parent whose child is bright but needs the emotional reinforcement supplied by competition could select the traditional teacher-oriented approach; the parent could then send the creative child with an aversion to competition to either a Montessori or British Infant School with structured but less teacher-dominated classrooms.

Socio-Economic Balance

Essentially, the idea of educational alternatives constitutes the best reason for vouchers. Additionally, the voucher plan contributes to educational reform in a more political sense. The voucher plan has been so designed to make for the most mix of students from different class backgrounds. Despite the fact that James Coleman, in his monumental study, found that poor children learn best when integrated with more affluent children, there is little evidence that the relationship is causal. Coleman also concluded that the black poor children did well in this setting mainly because they developed an identity, a feeling that they could achieve and control their futures. He found that black poor children did well with both *black* and white pupils who were middle class. Acknowledging the reality that there is no substantial black middle class, the probability is that the stress of the voucher plan on a socio-economic balance will translate itself into school integration. And although it is doubtful whether it will affect educational performance, it will widen the political and moral options of black poor parents.

Another powerful argument in favor of vouchers is that the plan would cut through the infrastructures of school bureaucracies impeding reform. And that would be no small accomplishment. Educational reformers have long recognized the need to tailor public school bureaucracies to fit the complex needs of clients. The voucher system enables school professionals to break from the Oedipal mold of central school bureaucracies. As such it constitutes as great a threat to the public school institution as that posed by having the public determine policy in a community-controlled school system.

Despite these attractive ideas the voucher plan has been rigged to fail. For one thing, the voucher plan is elitist. It is being foisted upon parents in much the same fashion that the Jesuits sought to win China: convert the Mandarins and you convert China. Jencks' plan was sold to Nixon's Office of Economic Opportunity without so much as a whisper of support from parents throughout the country. It was a strategy without a constituency. OEO has committed nearly $6 million a year for nearly eight years to experiment with the plan. Along with Jencks' staff from the Center for Policy Studies they are beating a drum in some 39 cities hoping to elicit some support. OEO and the Center have either contacted the local poverty or the education establishment to canvass the area for enthusiastic support. Early this year, a city will be chosen and the experiment will begin next fall.

They have based their strategy on a remarkably naive assessment of educational politics. Jencks and his followers are convinced that there are no irreconcilable forces in American education, but rather there is a consensus. The fight for community control in New York, according to this view, was but the result of a mishandling of the teachers' union by the Ford Foundation and its advisers; Jencks has said of the voucher plan that neither he nor OEO "wants another Ocean Hill-Brownsville." Consequently, Jencks' aides have notified their OEO counterparts in 30 cities that this consensus of educational interests is necessary before a city may be considered for the grant. According to the directives of one center staff aide, a city must have the "strongest possible language in support of a voucher experiment . . . (from) teachers' union, mayor's office, Catholic school system, other non-public schools, key state legislators, governor's office, civil rights groups, community action agency, model city agency, and, last, but certainly not least, parents' groups."

Such a reasoning together is well nigh impossible. No sooner had Jencks and OEO announced the voucher plan than he was embroiled in conflict—the Ocean Hill-Brownsville he would like to avoid. And in that controversy the voucher plan does not have the support of the black community which gave birth to the community control movement. The American Federation of Teachers, following the conservative example of its New York local, branded the voucher plan as "hucksterism" that "could turn into a very costly and tragic mistake with far-reaching social implications." The American Jewish Congress followed suit by terming the plan a "disaster for our country," fearing a breakdown of church-state separation. And later, the NAACP cautioned against vouchers as promoting racial separation. Still, OEO has not wavered in its support and OEO Director Donald Rumsfeld defended vouchers by scoring critics as "lobbyists" who "border on the irrational (and) seem to have only one purpose: to stop the experiments—to stop learning."

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Much of this early criticism of the voucher plan is unfounded. The aim of the voucher advocates is not to rejuvenate a financially starved parochial school system nor to give white racists a new mechanism to avoid school integration. Indeed, Jencks' concern with the class background of pupils borders on obsession. He has mandated that the voucher experiment integrate a middle class and the poor. Neither is Jencks so enamored of the example of American business as to let technology and fast-selling educational gimmickry through the schoolhouse door. To everyone but Jencks, the opposition of the teachers' union, defenders of the *status quo*, was predictable. Public schooling has become the private enterprise of only their public managers, school professionals and teachers. The voucher plan would, somewhat like community control, disperse that power. And whatever threatens the public school system is bound to be opposed by schoolmen.

Painful Lesson

This is a political lesson the voucher advocates are painfully learning. Of the 30 cities considered for an experiment, none has lived up to expectations. It has been impossible to gain the consensus of groups desired. In Milwaukee and Philadelphia, prime targets, the local boards have been cool to the idea. Trenton, suggested by progressive State Education Commissioner Carl Marlburger, is currently embroiled in a racial confrontation over a token school-integration plan. Kansas City faces some strong opposition on the church-state issue. Those cities which have received endorsements from their local boards (Seattle; San Diego; Alum Rock, San Jose) are not the stuff of a national program that seeks to "improve the education of children particularly disadvantaged children," and also seeks "to give parents, and particularly disadvantaged parents, more control over the kind of education their children get." What happens in Alum Rock has little implication for the rest of the nation. The frontrunner, Gary, Indiana, has the ardent backing of a black Mayor, Richard Hatcher, and a largely black school board, but has a powerful white enemy in the State Education Commissioner. Moreover, Gary may be too black, and too militant, for the cautious minds at the Harvard center and at OEO.

That the voucher plan has no grassroots constituency may prove its undoing. In Trenton, New Jersey, for example, the plan seemed well on the way to being adopted by a cross-section of civic groups mainly through the astute maneuvering of the local OEO program developer Walter Sullivan. Sullivan cajoled the Mayor, the NAACP and Urban League representatives, and many board members into a quiet alliance behind the voucher plan while neutralizing the teachers' union. However, in holding public hearings to force a few recalcitrant board members into sponsoring the plan, Sullivan was surprised to discover little support in the black community. Most black school activists were lukewarm over vouchers, although they felt their schools were abominable. They much preferred community control, and the voucher plan seemed a step backwards.

The voucher plan, unfortunately, does not touch on some key problems. The plan does not deal with teacher attitudes, a prime source of complaint to black poor parents whose children suffer from self-fulfilling prophecies. Moreover, the role parents play would not heighten the self-esteem needed by black poor parents or their children. The only control parents have is the passive one of all consumers: to buy or not to buy. They cannot shape educational policies or become involved in the schools. They may only vote with their feet: select or reject one school over another.

Voucher advocates seeking black support argue unconvincingly that the plan could possibly lend itself to community control of education. Although what they say is true (and many community control advocates consider vouchers a backdoor approach), Jencks' aversion to community control does not bear them out. OEO is not only wary of another Ocean Hill-Brownsville, but Jencks has publicly branded community control of no educational consequence and politically counter-productive. Of course, the possibility still exists. There is nothing to prevent parents in a number of schools from exerting policy influence. The probability is that this could be the fate of the plan in any black and urban ghetto.

Nevertheless, voucher advocates have unduly depended on that very educational establishment they so wish to change. The key support they seek is that of the city school board whose policies and functioning the plan would so indelibly alter. So long as a city board bears such a responsibility—and without a countervailing force for change—there would be little likelihood of significant educational experimentation.

One other important defect in the plan is the lack of a formal role for the experimenters. Who will devise and offer the varied educational fare? In this crucial respect, the plan is silent. There are, of course, a number of highly experimental approaches such as open schools, symbolized by Herbert Kohl's experiments and the excellent community schools in Milwaukee. Voucher advocates are aware of these schools, most of which are part of the community control movement, and hope that the city chosen will have such schools to draw from. The resultant marriage could be beneficial to both the plan and the alternate schools who live a precarious foundation existence and are desperately in need of government funding. Again, however, the plan is sorely remiss in not charting a course of reform. Instead, too much is to be assumed by the city board of education, which has been guilty of educational neglect in the first place.

But the gravest difficulty with vouchers lies with the

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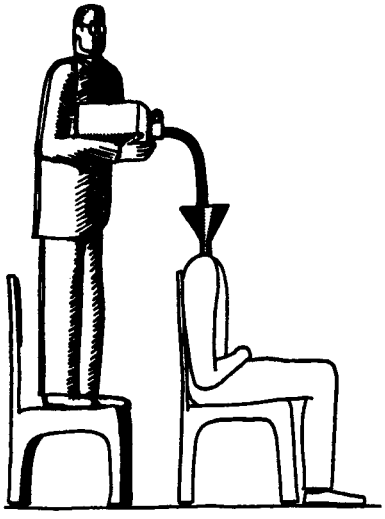
assumptions of the plan's designers. The plan is the product of a deep-seated ambivalence. On the one hand, it seeks to close the educational "gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged." On the other, the plan's chief architect is doubtful that this gap can ever be closed. Rather he has fallen into the "class heresy" which believes that schools can do very little to bring the poor on an educational par with the affluent.

On this point it is worth quoting Jencks at some length. In a *New York Times Magazine* article, Jencks said apropos of the poor, particularly the black poor:

> . . . I think that differences in school achievement are largely caused by differences between cultures, between communities, between socio-economic circumstances, and between families—not by differences between schools.
>
> . . . Even if black schools had the same resources and the same degree of responsibility to parents



> that the better suburban schools now have, ghetto children would still end up much less academically competent than suburban children.
>
> . . . Barring a general improvement in the social and economic position of black America, black children's school achievement is unlikely to improve much in the foreseeable future, no matter who runs the schools or how they are run.

This has been the cant schoolmen have found to explain educational failure. Since it cannot be the schools that are to blame, the home, the poor home without its cultural advantages, is at fault. And since the poor have never been educated in the schools, one cannot expect educational innovation or reform, no matter how imaginative, to succeed, as Murray Polner, Executive Assistant to the Chancellor of the New York City Board of Education, argued in these pages recently.

The obvious question then is why such educational skeptics are in the school business to begin with? Certainly, reforming the public schools along a voucher system intended to equalize opportunity makes precious little sense if one precludes the possibility that the poor can make it educationally. In this view school reformers should face the painful truth of class in our country and make do. The public schools should nurture an affluent elite. They should be bettered only to help those that need the least help. The focus should be always on the brightest and ways and means to foster intelligence. As for the poor, they can be tracked into manual skills.

That the public schools—intended for the poor—worked best for the affluent has been the thesis of our most able educational historian Lawrence Cremin. According to Cremin, the public school system, in effect, worked mostly for a middle class. The crucial distinction, however, is that these public schools failed the poor because of a *malfunctioning*. It is one thing to charge the public schools as being historically ineffectual for the poor and to imply that schooling cannot offset poverty. It is quite another to view this inadequacy as a result of a badly structured school system, implying that schools *can* educate the poor. "Under the right conditions," Mario Fantini writes, "real public control of public education could provide more effective education." For the school reformers, the fault lies not with the dream but with a badly realized version. A political reform of the *system*—rather than foredoomed educational program-tinkering in a bad system that Polner scored in Philadelphia—would change matters.

School reformers have as much contrary evidence that the poor *can* be educated. There is not only the testimony of such school systems as those of the Army and the Catholic church but the small gains made in such programs as Head Start, Bereiter-Englemann and so on. Moreover, the poor Jewish pupils in Israeli *kibbutzim* have boosted their IQ's as much as 40 points, a substantial gain which critics cannot dismiss. And there is, finally, commonsensical intuition that the poor are not really devoid of intelligence or learning ability. Who has not read Norman Podhoretz's *Making It* and Alfred Kazin's *A Walker in the City* without being convinced that schools can free poor boys from mental and physical slums?

One cannot, therefore, accept a dismal view of schools, And, in truth, neither can the voucher advocates fully believe in the futility of reform. Nonetheless, this crippling assumption of an inability to educate the poor, coupled with an elitist strategy, hampers the voucher plan.

Still, vouchers could create exciting options to public education. The public school system might be goaded to visceral reform. One would rest easier, however, had the voucher plan been the work of someone like Kenneth Clark rather than Christopher Jencks. In the last analysis, it is the conception we have of learning that counts most.

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SCHOOL CRISIS – OR PARISH CRISIS?

PERHAPS THE PARISH SCHOOL CRISIS IS ONLY A SURFACE SYMPTOM OF A DEEPER MALAISE THAT BESETS THE PARISH ITSELF

GEORGE ELFORD

In the growing volume of literature and rhetoric on the "Catholic school crisis" there is surprisingly little attention given to the interdependence between the Catholic parish and the parochial school. This is in spite of the fact that, with 57 percent of the parishes in the United States operating parish schools, the typical American parish is very definitely in the school business. Current figures show that some 60 percent of the operational cost of the school is borne by the parish directly. The school support usually consumes from 40 to 65 percent of the parish's total income. With this financial arrangement, the extent to which the school is dependent upon the parish is quite clear. Yet, is there possibly another dimension to this interdependence between parish and school? To what extent is the parish dependent upon the school? Does the school in some ways sustain and legitimize the parish? Does the school provide many parishes, not in theory, but in fact, with a raison d'être? Could it be that what is labeled as a crisis in Catholic schools is actually, at its roots, a crisis in Catholic parishes? This line of questioning is seldom explored. In order to formulate it more precisely, several hypotheses are offered here, at least for discussion and, perhaps someday, for careful research.

The first of these hypotheses deals with what the parish actually does. It would seem that in most of the 9000 parishes that operate schools the parish school program receives the greatest amount of attention in terms of funds, personnel and activity. As a rule, the school is the chief focus of interest and weekday participation. It is, between Sundays, the business of the parish.

Operating a school is something the typical parish does and feels it does well. According to recent attitudinal surveys, many parishes which operate schools find them a singular source of satisfaction, giving the parish leaders a real sense of accomplishment. Catholic school reorganizers and planners have been met with the protest: "If you close the school (or even consolidate at another location), you might as well close the parish too."

In the light of these facts and these attitudes, it seems clear that if we were to compare the school with the other programs carried on in a typical parish, in terms of parishioner contact hours, the expenditure of time and interest by full-time parish personnel, and the use of facilities and financial resources, it would be possible to establish the hypothesis that *"In the typical Catholic parish, the parish school is the only major program in operation."*

Moving from what parishes usually do to what they should be doing, presumably a hypothetical design for the form and functioning of the ideal local church or parish could be drawn from theological sources. It probably would be described in terms such as these: The local church or parish is a believing community, principally adult in character and focus, a community of learning (word), service (witness), and celebration (worship). Its "success" is measured in terms of (a) its contribution to Christian learning, for adults as well as children, (b) the providing of genuine service to the human community, service which goes beyond self-interest and self-perpetuation, and (c) an authentic, prayerful celebration or worship, which at once expresses and renews the community's commitment to faith and service. Accepting this model of the local church or parish as a believing, serving, and celebrating community it would be valuable to describe "community," "belief," "service" and "celebration" or "worship" in operational terms. One could then evaluate in these same terms the actual performance of parishes.

In exploring the idea of the parish as a Christian community, one could determine to what extent the school is the chief source of cohesiveness, drawing together children, parents and parish staff. The refrain is not uncommon among lay Catholics. "Oh, we were involved and active over at St.————'s when the kids were in school." One would need to determine just how much adult-to-adult interaction (in contrast to parent-to-parent or parent-to-teacher) takes place in the typical parish. This would reflect the degree to which the parish was an adult community.

As a learning community, at first glance, the parish seems to realize itself through the school and through little else. For example, recent surveys in various parts of the country have reported that the majority of laity felt that they did not learn much from the Sunday sermon, an institution which promises to remain the chief vehicle of adult learning in the church for some

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time. Even with recent gains, adult education remains in its infancy. The degree to which the typical parish is a learning community is another question which merits some study.

Considering the parish as a Christian community of service, one might explore to what extent parish societies, the chief arms of parish action, are involved with community service. One might suspect that, apart from the national programs related to Catholic Relief Services, there is little going on. Most parishes deal exclusively with the internal problems and needs of their own parishes. One might also investigate how often church leaders are involved with local political and social issues when there is no specifically Catholic interest or position at stake. At times, the parish school is cited as an instance of community service. While it surely serves a public purpose, one must admit that it is not operated with that in mind. The self-interest motive which accounts for the existence of the parish school prevents it from being taken as a sign (witness) of the parish's concern for the community at large.

In viewing the parish as a celebrating or worshiping community, the focus is naturally directed toward the Sunday liturgy. While the new liturgy has been accepted as an improvement, one might question to what extent Sunday Mass is the most powerful community experience that the celebration of the Lord's supper was meant to be. On this score, the history of the Mass has been less than glorious, beginning with the difficulties cited by St. Paul to the problems of the present. Recently, a gesture was added to the Mass to actively express the fellowship of the worshiping community. Ironically, it often has served more effectively to dramatize the absence of fellowship in those congregations, where it has not yet been discontinued. Recall, the generally limp feeling that comes over many congregations when the celebrant, usually from the safety of some distance, makes the ritual suggestion, "Let us offer each other the sign of peace."

Practice vs. Theory

All of these observations lead to the formulation of another hypothesis. With the theological model of the parish clearly defined in operational terms, one could hypothesize that *the model or typical parish, when measured against the theological model of a parish, would fare badly.*

In this same view, it would be interesting and valuable to explore the present thinking of pastors and parish leaders to determine the model or ideal of a parish which motivates their plans and decisions and against which they evaluate their own performance. This assumes politely that parish leaders make or are encouraged to make some evaluation in terms other than debt reduction. Even accepting this happy assumption, a devil's advocate might well suggest that in the typical parish, the working model of what should go on in a parish, what the pastor should do, and what the actual performance goals of the parish should be, are a far cry from the above theological model. Thus another hypothesis would be that *there are serious differences between contemporary theology and the concepts which support the day-to-day operation of the typical parish today.*

As an important corollary to this hypothesis, there appears to be a serious and, at times, disastrous gap between the ideals of the current products of all Catholic schools, especially high schools and colleges, and the status quo in the typical parish. It is almost as if, the more seriously these young people take today's religion or theology course, the more they are alienated by their experiences upon returning to their own parish. Simply to wave off a generation of our best educated young Catholics or to lump this matter in with the current flap on religion textbooks is to court disaster.

All of this is not to suggest that nowhere are there parishes that would fare well in terms of the ideal parish suggested above. It would seem logical to suggest that in these parishes, Catholic school problems do not take on dramatic overtones. One would assume that because these parishes will continue not only to be viable but even quite "successful," with or without their own parish school, they are not distraught at any prospect of change. Thus they would experience a greater freedom to explore alternatives, to try innovative approaches, or to join with other parishes in consolidated programs. At the same time, one need not suggest that Catholics in such parishes place any less importance on the value of the Catholic school experience. They would simply have greater resources to cope with the situation, if and when the Catholic school would not be readily available. By identifying these parishes and contrasting them with the model group, one could explore the following hypothesis, *that parishes which function more in agreement with the theological ideal or model evidence less tension and greater flexibility when faced with educational problems.*

Conversely, it would seem that parishes which are in trouble when contrasted to the theological ideal tend to be very much school-centered and thus dependent on the school. Because the school in these parishes is the vital bond that ties parents, sisters, and children to the parish, any suggestion of closing, reorganizing, or relocating the school would likely stir up outbursts of a very rigid parochialism. Ironically, it might well be that this rigid parochialism will prove the undoing of many a parochial school.

Studies of parishes have their special problems. In a 1967 study of the Detroit archdiocese, Wolfgang Grichting, a Swiss priest-sociologist, attempted to contrast types of parishes on the basis of varied patterns of delegation of authority. He was unsuccessful. Parishes did not vary sufficiently with this supposed variable.

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This same difficulty of identifying independent variables could pose problems in exploring the above hypotheses.

Another problem-area could be the identification of just who actually constitutes the functioning parish. Surely the pastor is a key person. Grichting and others have identified several types and mentalities among the Catholics in a typical parish. One researcher has suggested that it is the particular sub-group with whom the pastor agrees and identifies, and vice versa, that really determines whatever distinctive atmosphere and character a parish might have.

In general, the observations of Grichting confirm the worth of the above hypothesis. Grichting noted the organizational recalcitrance of Roman Catholic parishes toward "rejuvenation through effective infusion of the Vatican II spirit." In terms of the above hypotheses, this rejuvenation would amount to transforming the typical school-centered parish of questionable viabilty into a truly self-sustaining adult community which can prosper with or without a school. Clearly, such a transformation could not be accomplished without parish leadership of a much higher caliber than what is now required for the maintenance of the typical parish. Even though he was studying one of the most progressive dioceses in the country, Grichting's observations of the actual day-to-day activities of the expected leaders were not flattering. Grichting was not optimistic about parish renewal. He saw the present clerical system as the chief obstacle to this renewal:

> "All our evidence points to the fact that the pastors who could bring about the necessary changes are not interested in so doing because they seem perfectly happy doing what they do despite some sporadic claims to the contrary. In sum, our informants are reluctant to instigate any change of the traditional predicament simply because it would pull the carpet from underneath their feet."

These problems in leadership are certainly not new—they have simply been highlighted by the demands of the times. For years, the typical, or traditional parish has not demanded much in terms of leadership. Yet it would be grossly unfair to the present parish clergy to suggest that the typical parish is their doing, the product of their work. It would be more accurate to say that they themselves are the product of the typical or traditional parish. For generations, the state of pastoral theology in seminaries was so low that whatever pastoral theology most priests of today learned, they learned from practical experience. Practical experience most often meant experience in a school-centered, traditional parish. Thus, this typical parish, for years the institutional embodiment of the church for most Catholics of today, has shaped the role-definitions, self-concepts, and expectancies of the laity and especially the clergy for several generations. We are all products of our past. What a pastor does or does not do is often derived from the accepted precedents and patterns of pastoral conduct— which are largely shaped by the institution which is the typical parish—rather than from any fresh look at theology and the needs of the times.

One remedy for this situation is continuing professional growth on the part of the clergy. Unfortunately, the clerical system has not effectively encouraged, and in ways has even discouraged, professional growth among the clergy. For example, Grichting found that a large number of pastors were reluctant to engage in any consistent and extensive intellectual work. He reported that two out of five had not read a book of any kind in the past six months. He also found that, while assistants read more (only one in five had not read a book in six months), the longer they were ordained the less they read. Grichting concludes with these remarks:

> "As telling as these diagnoses may be, they certainly offer little comfort with regard to the future development. Our repeated postulate that priests must become professionals and 'clinical theologians' is and even more will be indispensable if the parish is to provide that spiritual climate which will enable its members to arrive at a meaningfully integrated

> world view. The realization of this, however, is not so much a function of the efforts individual priests will make but of the reorganization of the parish that makes it possible and necessary to allocate its manpower—clerical and lay alike—according to vocation and training. The question now is: Will the diocese exert the pressures needed to make the parishes free themselves sufficiently from the past to bring about the necessary changes?"

At first glance, these problems described by Grichting seem somewhat removed from the crisis in Catholic schools. But look again. Perhaps the Catholic school crisis is only a surface symptom of a deeper malaise that besets the parish itself. The relationship between diagnosis and treatment is obvious. If the school crisis is merely a symptom of the parish crisis, then the remedies must go far beyond the school. This possibility certainly deserves more attention than it has received. Hard questions, asked in terms of hypotheses such as those suggested above, are a necessity if we are sincerely interested in an accurate diagnosis, to say nothing of a remedy for the illness we have so far chosen to describe as the "Catholic school crisis."

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THE STATISTICS OF CRISIS

Discussion of the parochial schools' trouble is taking on a new precision

JOSEPH McLELLAN

Everyone knows that the parochial schools are in trouble; they have been for at least five years and are likely to remain so until they pass from the American scene. Such is, currently, the conventional wisdom on the topic, based largely on fragmentary, impressionistic data but nonetheless widespread and accepted both by those who rejoice and those who lament to see parish education dying.

Discussion of the schools' trouble is about to take on a new precision, a new realism. The first comprehensive, statistical outline of data on Catholic elementary and secondary schools has been published by the Data Bank of the National Catholic Educational Association and its figures reveal that, sure enough, there is trouble in the schools but trouble is by no means the whole picture.

A Statistical Report on Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools for the Years 1967-68 to 1969-70 (Available at $2.50 per single copy from NCEA, 1 Dupont Circle, Suite 350, Washington, D.C., 20036.) registers a decline of about seven percent in the number of Catholic schools over the three-year period covered and a loss of nearly 650,000 students—more than ten percent of the total enrollment. But it also shows—still on a relatively small scale—the beginnings of a healthy reorientation and an improvement of standards.

On the top official level, at least, the publicly expressed attitude about Catholic schools these days is hopeful; the figures which others may interpret as symptoms of impending death are seen as signs of ferment and constructive change.

The Catholic school today "is having an identity crisis," according to Dr. Edward R. D'Alessio, director of the U.S. Catholic Conference's Division of Elementary and Secondary Education. In its effort to "come to grips with itself in terms meaningful to the total Catholic community and to society in general," Dr. D'Alessio believes, the Catholic school has an advantage because it is generally "freer to assume an experimental posture" than is the public school.

Rev. Albert C. Koob, O. Praem., president of the NCEA, also stresses the potential for positive change in the schools' present situation. There is no question that a new kind of Catholic is emerging from the crisis, Fr. Koob said in an interview: "The real problem is that of staying alive while we reorganize. A re-examination is taking place. Are Catholic schools significantly different from public schools or are they like the public schools with religion tacked on? If the latter is true, we should be considering special religious education programs, not full-time schools."

Among the signs of creative change noted by Fr. Koob are the 500 boards of education now in operation across the country and the 80 high schools which now offer adult education programs as well as regular courses.

The reorganization of Catholic education will probably take about five years, Fr. Koob estimates, and its direction and progress will depend largely on how the currently unsettled question of tax support is solved.

There are at least two schools of thought on how Catholic education would be affected by government aid. The National Association of Laymen, whose membership is seriously divided over the principles involved in government support of Catholic schools, has taken a temporary, ad hoc position opposing government aid until the social value of Catholic schools has been fully explored and clear-cut standards, priorities and systems of accountability have been set up. The use of tax money for aid to parochial schools in their present condition will only help to preserve an unsatisfactory status quo, the NAL insists.

Fr. Koob, equally interested in new priorities and professional standards, believes that an infusion of tax money, rather than preserving the status quo, would accelerate the improvement of Catholic schools. "A legislature that is investing heavily in a school system will want to know how its money is being spent and will want to be sure that the schools meet certain standards."

So much for opinion. What is shown concretely by the factual data in the NCEA survey?

Probably the most significant note in the report is its pinpointing of the parochial school as the institution in trouble. While they are overwhelmingly the largest sector of Catholic education, parochial schools remain only a part of the total and there are other parts that are holding firm or expanding while the parochial schools dwindle. The school controlled by a pastor—in most cases a man with no special training or abilities either in education or in administration—is not the model for the Catholic

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school of the future. Besides having administrative problems in many cases, the parish-supported system of education has often resulted in haphazard distribution of schools, particularly in regions with high concentrations of Catholic population dating back to a time before the need for coordinated planning was clearly seen.

Efforts to find new units of organization, larger than the individual parish but smaller than the diocese, are progressing in several places. The Dubuque diocese, for example, has set up a cluster plan which eliminates parish schools. Parishes unable to support a school of their own are pooling their efforts for a joint educational project in St. Paul-Minneapolis and inner-city parishes in several large east coast cities are setting up their own systems within the diocesan system .

This trend is reflected in the most spectacular growth figure in the NCEA Data Bank's report: while the number of parochial schools declined by about seven percent, the number of inter-parochial schools (serving two or more parishes) almost doubled. Diocesan schools increased slightly.

Inter-parochial schools are still few in absolute numbers, but a growth figure of this size could mean the beginning of a new development. The 268 inter-parochial elementary schools which the Data Bank found functioning in 1969-70 were only 2.7 percent of all Catholic elementary schools, but the corresponding figures for 1967-68 show only 135 schools—1.3 percent of the total. The development of inter-parochial secondary schools has been less spectacular; in fact, the number dropped from 233 to 229 in the three-year period. But in 1967-68, these schools were 10.2 percent of the total and by 1969-70, while declining in absolute numbers, they rose in relative terms to 11.0 percent. Significantly, when the NCEA inquired about new school construction last year, only seven newly-built schools were reported. All were inter-parochial.

Other figures trending upward against the general current in the study are those related to overall expenses, teacher-pupil ratios and per-pupil costs.

The report warns that financial reporting on schools is just beginning to be standardized in some parishes and dioceses and that the overall figures are based partly on estimates. But if the total figure given for the cost of Catholic schools in 1969-70, $1.364 billion, is subject to correction, the correct figure must certainly be at or above $1.3 billion. This is up by at least $100 million from the 1967-68 figure of $1.204 billion.

Per-pupil costs (estimated) have leaped from $335 to $434 in secondary schools and from $145 to $200 in elementary schools during the three-year period. These are substantially lower than the national average of $717 per public school pupil, partially because of the estimated $429 million in "contributed services" received from teachers in the religious life during 1969-70 (up from $424 million in 1967-68 but down from $433 million in 1968-69). It is also a reflection of the annual salary range of lay teachers in Catholic schools—$4,000 to $7,000 in most elementary schools, $5,000 to $8,000 for secondary schools.

Parish and diocesan subsidies take care of about two-thirds of this expense on the elementary level, less than one-fourth on the secondary level.

Part of the increasing expense can be traced to the loss of more than 10,000 teaching sisters in elementary schools in three years. The total number of priests, brothers and sisters in the schools has gone down from 99,400 in 1967-68 to 87,000 in 1969-70. At the same

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time, the number of full-time lay teachers has gone up from about 68,300 to 80,200. Full-time staff has declined only slightly for the three years, going down approximately 2,900 in the elementary schools but going up 2,400 in the secondary schools. Part-time staff numbered approximately 28,200 in 1969-70, an increase of nearly 8,000 in three years.

The most striking personnel change has been in the elementary grades, where lay teachers and sisters are now almost evenly balanced. The 1969-70 ratio of 51 sisters to every 49 lay teachers represents a drastic shift from the 59/41 ratio of 1967-68. In secondary schools, religious still outnumber the laity 55/45, but the ratio was 62/38 in 1967-68.

Since full-time staff was holding firm and part-time staff was growing while the number of students was dropping by more than half a million, it is no surprise that the teacher-student ratio has changed significantly. In elementary schools, it went from one teacher to every 33.4 students in 1967-68 to one for 29.2 in 1969-70. Secondary school figures have gone from 1/20 to 1/18.

A section of the report giving data on teachers' qualifications gives only current information without corresponding data for other years, so that it is impossible at present to document any trends. The impression received from the statistics, however, is that Catholic school staffs tend, on the whole, to be relatively youthful and fairly well qualified—much better qualified on the secondary than on the primary level, however. The most remarkable figures, perhaps, are those showing five full-time administrators (including three for secondary schools) who are under age 40. Half of the religious teachers and 63.7 percent of the lay teachers in elementary schools are also under 40, as are half the religious teachers and 78.9 percent of the lay teachers in secondary schools.

In the elementary schools which reported to the NCEA (86 percent of the total), the percentage of teachers with degrees was significantly higher than the parallel figures in a 1962 University of Notre Dame study. In 1969-70, 80.4 percent of the religious elementary school teachers and 59.5 percent of the lay teachers had at least a bachelor's degree. The corresponding figures for 1962 were 57 percent of the religious and 34 percent of the lay teachers.

Percentages for secondary school teachers are almost at the saturation point; 98.3 percent of the religious and 96.1 percent of the lay teachers have at least a bachelor's degree; more than 40 percent of all secondary teachers have an MA degree or higher, including 217 teachers and 108 "other staff" with doctorates.

In addition to highlights of this sort, the report contains a wealth of other data, admirably tabulated. With a few minutes' scanning, for example, you can pinpoint the 17 states where 11th grade enrollment went up between 1967 and 1970. You can note that the number of sixth grade students went up from 12 to 21 in the two Alaskan schools which reported. Or you can note that schools are closing much faster in rural areas than in the inner city—and slowest of all in the suburbs.

From an inspection of the report, a coherent picture of the Catholic pupil emerges: still numerous, though declining; less crowded in the classrooms; taught frequently by laymen and, more often than in the past, by teachers wtih academic degrees. His education is more expensive than it once was but still less expensive than that of his public school friends.

The report does not answer some of the key questions facing Catholic school administrators, but it gives a framework in which the answers can be sought more effectively; it puts the questions in precise terms. Foremost among these questions, no doubt, is that of shrinkage: why has the number of schools gone down from 12,814 to 11,937 in three years? Why is enrollment down from 5,215,598 to 4,672,510? Why are there an estimated 5,800 empty classrooms—and room for another 541,600 students—in the schools that remain open?

Answers offered to these questions are numerous, and more than one has elements of truth in it.

It can be argued that part of the decline represents a tightening money supply; in a parallel situation the number of schools rose by only three and enrollments went down slightly during the 1930-40 decade.

It may also be noted that the supply of Catholic school children is tapering off as the size of Catholic families approaches the American average. There has been a regular annual reduction in the number of infant baptisms reported by the Official Catholic Directory during the past decade. The 1970 figure was 1,086,858; in 1962 it had been 1,352,371 and each year since then has marked a step downward.

The Catholic population trend is symptomatic of another development which has affected Catholic schools—the emergence of Catholics from a ghetto culture into the mainstream of American society and the consequent weakening of the schools' function as preservers and transmitters of religious-ethnic folkways.

A major impact on the schools, as on every other part of Catholic life, has been that of the Second Vatican Council and the polarization that has followed it. Readjustment of Catholic education to assimilate the fact of the Council has weakened support among two types of parents—on one side, those who find religious schools anachronistic and irrelevant; on the other, those who are upset because the schools offered to their children are no longer the same as the schools they attended.

Caught in so many cross-currents, the Catholic schools certainly can never return to the comfortable position they held a decade ago. Which way they are heading is still uncertain, but the Data Bank's study and the annual reports which will follow it are beginning to establish some points of reference for charting the course.

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BOOKS

Saving another reform from its friends

Homework: Required Reading for Parents and Teachers

GLORIA CHANNON

Outerbridge & Dienstfrey, $5.95

This Book Is About Schools

SATU REPO, EDIT.

Pantheon, $7.95

MARVIN HOFFMAN

Friends, it appears that the educational apocalypse is at hand. Harvey Scribner, the Chancellor of New York City Schools, has spoken out in favor of drastic educational reform along the lines of the British Infant School approach. For the uninitiated, the infant school classroom consists of a number of activity areas—science, math, painting, reading—among which the students are free to move, choosing to work at their own pace and according to their own interests of the moment. The teacher's role is drastically different from anything most of us would recognize from our childhoods. In the infant school he is responsible for selecting and arranging the materials in the activity areas, and spends his day working closely with individual students or with small groups who need his help. Almost never is there occasion for the teacher to conduct "a lesson" for the entire class. If all goes well the child is making interesting discoveries about the world rather than serving as a passive receptacle for imparted information.

The infant school method has been evolving slowly over the past twenty-five years in Leicestershire, England, which has become something of a Mecca for American educators. As Charles Silberman has documented in his recent study, *Crisis in the Classroom* [see the review in this issue, p. 428] the approach is now in wide use in North Dakota and Vermont. A friend in New Orleans recently described to me an exciting visit to an experimental infant school program in Abbeville, Louisiana. If that isn't unlikely enough, only recently Albert Shanker, President of New York's United Federation of Teachers, who has not distinguished himself as a far-seeing proponent of educational change in recent years, endorsed the infant school approach. He attached one proviso, however: that it be instituted on a large, sweeping basis rather than as a small demonstration.

And that is precisely where I begin to wonder whether those of us who have been advocating educational reform these past few years are about to find ourselves uncertainly astride a runaway horse, facing the wrong end. It's all happened before. America seems to specialize in wolfing down half-understood theories and techniques for change, disgorging them less than half-digested and proclaiming that they were never fit for human consumption in the first place. The honor roll of such casualties in recent years includes nonviolence, maximum feasible participation of the poor, integration and community control. In education, the most famous "casualty" was the "progressive education" movement which was widely proclaimed a failure when it was hardly even given an honest try.

All of which is an extended explanation for my gratitude at the appearance of Gloria Channon's short gem of a book, *Homework: Required Reading For Teachers and Parents*. Mrs. Channon offers an account of her own painful attempts to abandon her traditional approaches to teaching, which she came to see as unhealthily manipulative and authoritarian, and move toward a more "open classroom," modeled after the British Infant Schools.

> In the midst of a lesson of small consequence and content, presented after weeks of struggle to achieve some order out of inherited chaos, I became aware of what was really happening. I was not giving a lesson to the whole class at all. The class, from exhaustion or compassion, was prepared to give me silence while I conducted a series of two- or three-minute individual lessons, over and over and over, with a series of children selected at random from a bored, inattentive and for the moment, unresisting mass. It was and is the most inefficient and irritating way to teach. The illusion of efficiency, of mass-production, is shattered as child after child demonstrates that all he has been doing has been waiting patiently for the lesson to be over, or at best for his turn when the teacher would give him a three-minute lesson individually tailored to his revealed needs.

The book is valuable precisely because it does not underplay the difficulty of implementing an approach to education which is fundamentally different from anything previously experienced by the teachers and their students. When we think of Mr. Shanker and his 50,000 teachers, we have to wonder where and whom the advice will come from—given the best of intentions—on such a massive scale during the transition. Few of us have the inner resources and dedication which carried Mrs. Channon through her fumblings and failures with no help from her superiors. At best her methods were grudgingly tolerated by her supervisors; at worst she was singled out for criticism. (In contrast, the Leicestershire teachers participate in regular workshops on infant school methods and are frequently visited by advisers who assist in sharpening their perception of what is and is not happening in their classes.)

But the tone of Mrs. Channon's observations is admirably unselfpitying and free of the accusatory whine of so many educational jeremiads. The System comes in for its share of perceptive criticism and the children's inabilities to adapt to newly offered freedom are faced squarely, with a great deal of

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sadness. ("There will always be a George, a Julio, a Walter, a Carl . . . They do not know what to do with themselves, but they do not want you to tell them what to do.")

But the emphasis is on the negative burden she—and, by implication, most teachers—bring to experiences of change. The eternal paradox of change is that the agents of change are also victims of the old order which they seek to replace. "I still felt, and very strongly, that if something is fun it can't be learning. . . ." ". . . A teacher must teach. I wanted to settle down with a child or a group and teach them. I wanted to control, direct, explain, clarify, select. But for a long time I had to force myself to be a wanderer too, yielding to children's definitions of an activity."

The difficulty of uprooting deeply entrenched attitudes and styles is just one of the reasons change is such a wracking, tortuous process. In this country we never seem willing to allow the time and the resources to place these changes on a solid footing. At the very least we must learn to look at the complexities of change through the eyes of others like Mrs. Channon who are searching for better ways to move beyond the present impasse without illusions. For an honest teacher, there are no panaceas. Many teachers are bitter about the outpouring of educational criticism written by non-teachers, but they have only themselves to blame. Every line of Mrs. Channon's book is suffused with the immediacy of her twelve years in the classroom. Very few other teachers have made the effort to communicate their cumulative wisdom to the world at large.

I am not terribly optimistic that the kinds of changes Mrs. Channon aspires to (and I share those aspirations) are ever possible in schools as they are currently constituted.

An increasing number of young people are already on the far side of the divide, having decided that public educational systems are unhealthy and essentially incurable. They would be likely to view Mrs. Channon's efforts as quixotic and misdirected. (In *What Do*

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I Do Monday?, John Holt reports that when teachers tell him they have been battling to change their schools for twenty years, he suggests that they have been wasting their time.) Those who have abandoned the public schools have directed their energies toward the creation of alternative educational institutions—free schools or "new" schools, as they like to call themselves. Although they share a common label, they are as diverse as they can be, ideologically and philosophically. The schools are bound together more by what they are rejecting and, McLuhan notwithstanding, by what their founders have read, than by any common approach to the day-to-day tasks of education. The literary deities of the Movement have been known to the general public for some time: Holt, Kozol, Friedenberg, Kohl, Goodman, Dennison.

But there are two periodicals that have received little general attention though they have helped to give a lot of scattered and beleaguered people the sense that they are part of a larger movement for change. One is the New Schools Exchange Newsletter, which acts as a bulletin board publicizing the births and deaths of new schools, as well as classified notices from dissatisfied teachers in search of liberation and from impoverished schools announcing job openings at subsistence wages. Only recently has the Newsletter begun to devote much space to deeper soul-searching about where new schools are going, what they can accomplish, and how they can come to grips with their own peculiar form of elitism.

But the New Schools Exchange has a long way to go in this regard before it can match *This Magazine Is About Schools*, an anomalous publication in the sense that its genesis preceded the proliferation of new schools. (I first heard about the publication while working in a pre-school program in Mississippi in 1966.) Moreover, it comes out of Toronto, which most of us, in our maddening U.S. parochialism, assume to be far from where the action is. In fact the magazine's editors and contributors were pioneers in the establishment of alternative educational institutions: Everdale, Superschool, Point Blank, and Rochdale College. Not all these experiments have flourished in the way the magazine has. Now one of these editors, Satu Repo, has put together a collection of pieces from the magazine and given it the inevitable title, *This Book Is About Schools*. Hopefully *This Book* will make the work of this brilliant group of young Canadians more widely known.

Although the articles in the collection are deeply rooted in a Canadian context, they are extremely relevant to where we are in the U.S. today. There is a pervasive concern with the relationship of politics to education, education to revolution. In the words of George Martell:

> I think the society is corrupt enough that I'd like to join the revolution, but I'm not certain what that means. Of course, I'm hoping that maybe one's begun—a revolution that's peculiarly modern—and that somehow I've joined it by being part of the free school movement, but I'm not at all sure, especially in this country.

The tone of Martell's words is fairly typical of the magazine and of this collection. Though the political concerns predominate, there is much more self-conscious wrestling with real, concrete experience than easy resort to rhetoric. Many of the articles are autobiographical explorations into the author's own education or attempts to educate others. The magazine often contains frank accounts of efforts to create new kinds of educational communities which have gone awry. Dennis Lee, a poet who was involved in the early stages of Rochdale College, says of his partners in that venture:

> Some, I think, have been affronted that what they had been mythologizing in advance as an academic apocalypse turned out to be housed in a series of rather shabby houses, plagued with the usual problems of communication and decision-making, and populated by thoroughly fallible human beings.

That kind of eyes-wide-open honesty about experimental education is as necessary as it is rare. Without it the new schools movement is in danger of drowning in a sea of mindless enthusiasm, not unlike the one which is currently threatening the Infant School movement in the United States.

Piety in the Public School

ROBERT MICHAELSEN

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NEIL G. McCLUSKEY

The problem of religion or religious values in public education has always been complicated by the religiously

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pluralistic nature of American society. The practical solution was to secularize or neutralize the public school by putting it outside the pale so far as the inculcation of all but the most fundamental secular and humanist values goes. In consequence, the American public school as presently structured is unable legally to assist its pupils to take a stand on, or even to confront, the central questions which come to grips with the meaning of man: his origin, his purpose, his destiny.

Almost anywhere a teacher of literature or social science is constrained to step gingerly and, above all with pure neutrality, in entering even the "safe" area labeled by the U.S. Supreme Court "teaching about religion."

Yet we may be kidding ourselves and shortchanging the young. Certainly we have not resolved the problem. Values cannot be eliminated from any human action posited by a reasoning human being, least of all the kinds of action which occur in a learning situation. We can pretend that there are value-free human activities but despite court decisions, schoolboard statements on policy, administrative directives and whatever, every part of the educational enterprise is permeated with values. Moreover, no one has yet found a way to sort them out perfectly—moral values, spiritual values, humanist values, natural values, religious values.

Comes now a helpful new book by Robert Michaelsen, professor of religious studies and chairman of the department of religious studies at the Santa Barbara campus of the University of California. Much of the historical ground (six of the nine chapters) has been well traveled but even here Michaelsen's map is brightened by insights and interpretations which freshen the scene.

The author chooses the term "piety" instead of "religion" in his title because he wants to deal with both civil and churchly realities. He understands by the term "acts and attitudes having to do with one's relationship to God (or the gods) or to one's family, superiors, community, people or nation"—reminiscent of Vergil's *"pius Aeneas."* More precisely Michaelsen defines public piety as reference to "the moral and spiritual resources of the American community, especially as they relate to the nation, and to attempts to articulate these resources."

Two-thirds of the book carefully examines the historic role of religion in shaping the American "faith" especially as embodied in the common public school. Few nations have proclaimed their faith in God and ultimacy more resoundingly and none has agonized more over religious formulations and compromises in the school than America. In their struggling over who and what should influence the school, the churches and sects were shunted aside in favor of new value philosophies, most notably the secular humanism of John Dewey.

The author points out how Dewey himself was "most articulate in picturing the role of the public school as being religious because of its crucial importance in Americanizing and democratizing the youth." Dewey wanted no part of formal institutionalized religion but was a strong advocate of religious values in the public classroom. By these he meant, according to Michaelsen, "a quality of experience, a manner of valuing, a range of attitudes." In other words, "for Dewey the religious had to do with what is distinctively human. And this was the central concern of the school."

The discussion on Catholic attitudes toward the common school movement might have been strengthened by reference to the work of Thomas T. McAvoy, Robert D. Cross or myself. At least during important intervals of the nineteenth century, Catholic leadership was sharply divided on the wisdom of the separate Catholic school.

The California professor handles well the modern court decisions regarding the separation of church and state in education. He writes: "The relentless logic of separation turns, like a vortex, ever in upon itself. It is an attractive logic—neat, sharp, decisive, pure. It is also a fateful logic which can only

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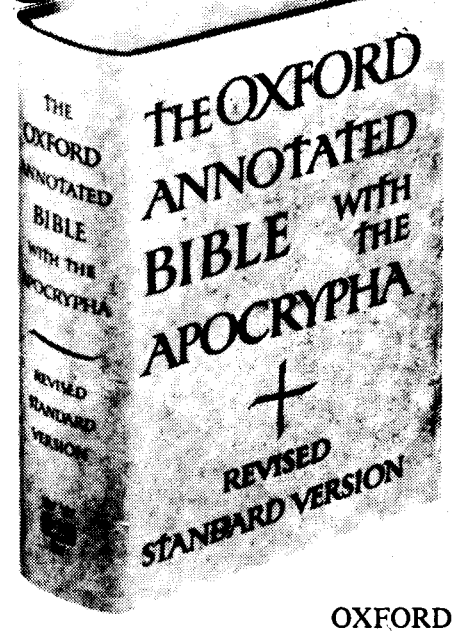

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lead in its conclusion to the complete separation of religion from public life. The merits of such a result are arguable; the possibility of its achievement in the United States remote."

The concluding chapter contains some of Michaelsen's personal positions. Since values, faith, and commitment are not going to vanish from public education, he argues for as intelligent an approach as possible. To begin, religion should not be regarded as a fetish or omnicompetent to solve all of the school's problems or society's ills.

He sees two alternatives: either the state becomes religionized in order to assume "the unifying and signifying role played by religion in archaic culture," or the society evolves a procedure for living with religious pluralism. Professor Michaelsen opts for the second which was, he states, the assumption upon which this country was established.

The school best deals with religion in an academic manner. Religion should be neither inculcated nor neglected in the public school. He seconds the Supreme Court's language of "teaching about" religion and teaching "objectively as a part of a secular program in education," of which study of the Bible should be an important part. What is needed, he insists, is "an approach which will help the student to understand something of the nature and history of religion without requiring him to abandon, change, or adopt a faith stance." He argues that the school should make the pupil aware that there are religious differences in America and help prepare them to cope with our faith diversity. Moreover, in the academic study of religion a person moves from where he is to look at others. "With skilled help," says the author, "he tries to see what others see—both in themselves and in the world beyond."

The task is not easy but a meaningful beginning, in the reviewer's opinion, is long overdue. Professor Michaelsen's book should encourage the growing group of educators that feel the necessarily secular character of the contemporary public school can be preserved even while public education follows the patterns delineated in this fine book. After all, the public school is an extension of the social community and should reflect society's legitimate concern for ensuring the quality of American life.

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Crisis in the Classroom

CHARLES SILBERMAN

Random House, $10

MAURICE R. BERUBE

Few books have enjoyed the critical reception of *Crisis in the Classroom*. *Atlantic* magazine prominently previewed Charles Silberman's work with lengthy excerpts. The *New York Times* elevated it into a cause célèbre by featuring a frontpage newstory the day of publication. Martin Duberman warmly endorsed it in the *Times*' book section by saying that "no book has done a better job" of "detailing the current horrors of the schools." Ronald Gross went one better in a frontpage review for *Book World*, bestowing on it the accolade of being "the best diagnosis and prescription for American education available between hard covers." *Saturday Review* took the unprecedented step of enlarging its book page to two, commissioned Frank Jennings (whom Silberman thanks in his foreword for "suggestions and comments") and ran his favorable review. Even the redoubtable critic Nat Hentoff felt constrained to mute any criticism, for fear of distracting from a shared belief that the schools are truly in crisis. If this wasn't enough, Albert Shanker, president of the United Federation of Teachers, and a defender of the *status quo*, praised Silberman for a "sober and brilliant analysis" in the *New Leader*. In short, no education book in memory has so overwhelmed the critics.

Is such acclaim warranted? Hardly. There have been a plethora of education books glutting the market these last few years, and surprisingly, many are excellent. Yet less than a dozen have profoundly influenced educational thinking and events the past decade, and Silberman's book does not rank with them. Only a few have been well received on publication; most have achieved their reputations slowly. Any representative list of these seminal works would have to include: Jerome Bruner's *The Process of Education*, James Coleman's *Equality of Educa-*

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tional Opportunity, Marilyn Gittell's *Participants and Participation,* Paul Goodman's *Growing Up Abroad,* Andrew Greeley and Peter Rossi's *The Education of Catholic Americans,* and any or all of the following classroom reports—Jonathan' Kozol's *Death at an Early Age,* John Holt's *My Children Fail,* Herbert Kohl's *36 Children,* and Nat Hentoff's *Our Children Are Dying.* These are the educational leaders of the 60's and Silberman's book does not match any in originality, scope or depth.

Why, then, did *Crisis in the Classroom* evoke such an unduly sympathetic response? For one thing, much of the book is well reasoned, even though the best of Silberman's thinking is derivative. For another, the book carries some awesome credentials: the imprimatur of a $300,000 Carnegie Foundation study, and the prior journalistic reputation of the author for an important work on race. Nevertheless, some books have had both qualities without being so highly touted. Coleman's study was initially ignored; Hentoff's book drew scant first notices.

Crisis in the Classroom, however, was the right book at the right time. It coalesces with an increasingly conservative national mood. Whereas the prevailing tone of the 60's was the stridency of social action, today's reader prefers the quietude of wish-fulfillment. Witness the stir caused by a companion book published by the same company, Charles Reich's *Greening of America,* which reassures battlefatigued liberals that there will be a new consciousness born without the attendant stress and pain of social conflict. So too, Charles Silberman accuses the schools of malfunction, but also pacifies with the information that some schools are succeeding. And more important, that success has been achieved without conflict. Nowhere in the 500 and some pages does Silberman discuss the great political issues of education that have very nearly torn our society asunder: integration, community control, or the tuition-voucher system. It would be as if the Council on Foreign Relations subsidized study of foreign policy with the result of a book justly critical of the Pentagon but silent on the Vietnam war. Silberman neatly avoids reopening an educational Pandora's box.

To his credit, Silberman has written an honest polemic on the schools. His original charge was to review teacher education, but he wandered afield to render an overview of American education. He is appalled by what he sees. Nevertheless, Silberman says nothing about the deplorable condition of our educational institutions that has not been said before, and said better. Perhaps this negative view of the schools kept critics silent who felt they could count one more on their side and an establishment critic to boot.

Unlike the Hentoffs and Kohls who register a controlled rage, Silberman is ever the polite critic. He discreetly refrains from offending anyone. Who is to blame for the crisis in the classroom? According to Silberman, no one. (*Atlantic* had entitled the excerpts *Murder in the Classroom;* a murder, no doubt, without a murderer.) Whereas the Kozols blame racist teachers with self-fulfilling prophecies, and the Gittells indict a malignant professional bureaucracy, Silberman absolves all parties of guilt. ". . . What is wrong with elementary and secondary education," Silberman writes, "has less to do with incompetence or indifference or venality than with mindlessness." Of course, these are the words whites, who opposed integration in the North and South, want to hear; it is the balm sought by New York school teachers

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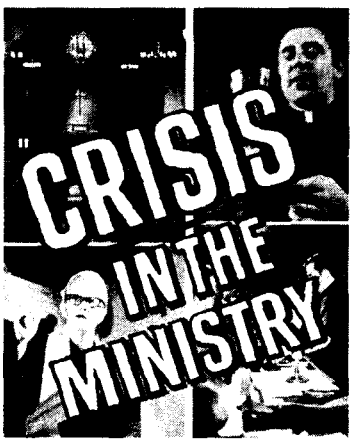

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who struck against a black community trying to reform the schools through parent power; and it is the "new politics" of weary liberals who fear the inevitable confrontations that occur between groups with different interests whenever any significant social change occurs.

What trips Silberman up is his narrow definition of reform. Consider his list of school reforms: the new math, computerized education, team teaching and the like; most are more properly innovative techniques in method and curricula. It is not that these innovations failed to reform a system; they were never intended to change how schools are run as much as to accommodate to them.

Silberman does find a panacea: the British Infant School method, first introduced to a large educational audience by Joseph Featherstone's *New Republic* articles, which is becoming all too faddish among some school activists. One recalls Silberman's simply overstating the case for the Montessori method, when it was at the height of a revival. It is doubtful whether any one method, curriculum, or teaching aid can succeed without first changing the manner in which our schools and colleges are run.

Only half of *Crisis in the Classroom* hits the mark. The other half may well narcoticize our impulse to do something about the schools.

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Ghetto School

GERALD E. LEVY

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JOSEPH A. SCIMECCA

In the acknowledgements preceding this book about an elementary school in a Brooklyn ghetto, Gerald Levy states that he owes an intellectual debt to such well known educators as Paul Goodman, Jonathan Kozol and Herbert Kohl. My immediate impression was, here we go again, another book by a romantic who succeeded in a corrupt institutional context because his heart was pure and he loved the children. Nothing could be further from the truth. Levy is a sociologist who took a job at Midway School, an elementary school located between a black and Puerto Rican ghetto, in the fall of 1967 to study it from a sociological perspective. Only one person there, a fellow teacher, knew of his true intentions. While some sociologists might balk at the ethics involved in the disguising of the author's intentions, there seems to be no other way he could have gone about studying "Midway." In this instance, at least, the end more than justified the means.

Levy's basic premise is that American society through its welfare institutions (the school system is included here) "communicates to and maintains distance from its lower classes." In order to understand the lower class school system, we must analyze the political context in which it is found. This context is one that few educators are willing to acknowledge—that the lower schools are geared to failure because Middle Class America cannot absorb an educated lower class. Hence the deceptions that pass for education in a ghetto school.

The name of the game at Midway, is control. The new teacher learns that unless one can discipline, one cannot teach—that good teachers do not have discipline problems. Levy's description of how the young teacher who left college with liberal and humanitarian ideals comes to finally betray them, to embrace the very system he had previously despised, is the best of its kind I have ever read. The following passage summarizes this process.

> The . . . teacher's liberalism is conditional on the children's empathy toward his problem. He expects the children to be as sensitive to his problems as he feels he is to their problem. He reacts angrily to their lack of appreciation and unwillingness to uphold their end of the bargain. He feels personally betrayed and begins to shout at the children, demanding that they keep quiet, stay in their seats, and stop eating. The demands are ineffective, for he had granted these freedoms previously. So the teacher must begin to threaten. He threatens to send a child to the principal's office, write a letter home to his mother, or have him suspended. He may chase a child around the room, pound his fist on the table or threaten to hit him. With each betrayal of the teacher's sense of decency and fairness, he depends more and more on the very "indecent" techniques he previously condemned.

Ultimately the majority come to resort to physical force. Their liberalism becomes separated from their role of teacher. They can attack atrocities in Vietnam, and still perpetuate a system

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that stigmatizes Black and Puerto Rican children as failures. This is the bargain they make with themselves in order to survive. The implication is obvious, the children are not the only ones to be destroyed at Midway elementary school.

Levy is a sociologist and his analysis is an institutional one. The ghetto school emerges as a bureaucracy whose only aim becomes its own perpetuation. The school administrators, who are in charge of the bureaucracy, interpret this to mean that things must run smoothly. Order again becomes linked to the definition of education. Curriculum, pedagogy, learning, are only meaningless words. Everyone knows that control is the only thing that matters.

What we have at Midway are teachers doing anything to get out of class (a new one on me was the selling of preparation periods—the market ranging from $1.50 to $2.50 for 45 minutes away from the children); administrators who try to keep anything adverse from filtering out to the district superintendent or to the militant president of the PTA; parents who want to know why their children cannot read, and do not know if the answers they receive are true; children who are trapped in an adult world, condemned to failure by a system they only barely understand; and above all an educational system that only pretends to educate.

The question arises in case studies of this sort, as to how representative is the unit under analysis. Can we generalize from what the author describes or has he made one tree stand for the forest? My answer to this question, from my own experiences is that, I suspect we can. During the three years I spent both as a regular teacher in ghetto schools and as a per diem sub traveling from school to school in order to finance my own graduate education in sociology, I came in contact with at least 30 schools, any one of which could have been Midway. Perhaps the only difference was that some had given up all pretenses of education. I have to admit that like the young teachers Levy describes, I too was beginning to legitimize a system I knew to be wrong. I was lucky, though, I left. But many didn't. They stayed to become perpetrators of that which they originally despised.

This then, is the heart of Levy's argument—the educational system in ghetto areas is morally corrupt. It destroys those who come into contact with it. To change it, we need to completely overhaul it. Nothing else will do. How long can we continue to condone, with our taxes and passive acquiescence, a system that makes failures of our children and "good Germans" of our teachers and administrators?

REVIEWERS

MARVIN HOFFMAN, director of Teachers and Writers Collaborative, and former associate director of the Child Development Group of Mississippi, has a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Harvard.

FATHER NEIL G. MCCLUSKEY, S.J., co-edited *The Catholic University: A Modern Appraisal* (U. of Notre Dame Press).

MAURICE R. BERUBE is on the staff of the Institute for Community Studies at Queens College in New York.

JOSEPH A. SCIMECCA, a sociologist at SUNY-Albany, co-authored *Crisis at St. John's.*

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 411)

tacts, I cannot recall ever meeting a non-Catholic who was comfortable with the word "catechetics." That fact is not conclusive evidence that the word is "irretrievably intramural" but it certainly gives me pause. In any case, my examination of the problem of this field can hardly be dismissed as a semantic game. Religious education ought to be a combination of good religious study and good education. That sounds like a truism but there is little doubt that people competent to judge would find the Catholic catechetical movement deficient in *both* religion and education. I am trying to invite the attention of people who are interested in either religion in education or education in religion but who would never go near anything labeled catechetical.

GABRIEL MORAN

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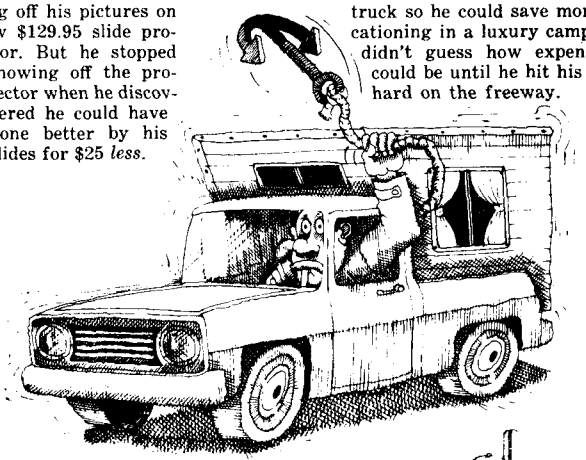
When Ann A.'s new $129.95 food waste disposer kept jamming on bones and refused to chew up grapefruit-rind halves, she wanted to kick the manufacturer. But when she found out she could have bought a disposal that *would* dispose of such things for only $112, she wanted to kick herself.

Bill B. felt like a million in his $70 raincoat—until he needed a *snow*coat and realized he could have gotten a raincoat he liked *with* a zip-in alpaca lining for just $60

Charlie C. had a great time showing off his pictures on his new $129.95 slide projector. But he stopped showing off the projector when he discovered he could have done better by his slides for $25 *less*.

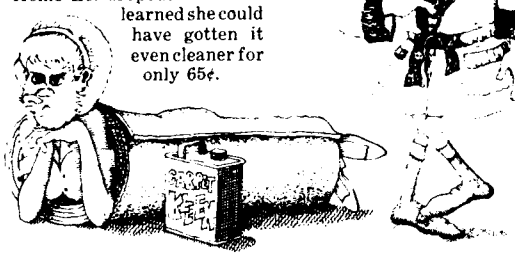
Dave D. bought a ¾-ton pickup truck so he could save money vacationing in a luxury camper. He didn't guess how expensive it could be until he hit his brakes hard on the freeway.



Frank F. loved the new $1.75 briefs his wife bought for his birthday . . . until they came out of the washer. If only she'd read *Consumer Reports*, she could have *kept* Frank happy and saved a lot of money.

Harry H. wanted to invest in the best when he repainted the bathroom. But by the time he learned that the best cost 70¢ *less* a quart than what he'd paid, the gloss had begun to dull.

Edith E. thought she was really saving money when she cleaned her 9x12 rug herself for only $2.60. She felt like a Home Ec. dropout when she learned she could have gotten it even cleaner for only 65¢.



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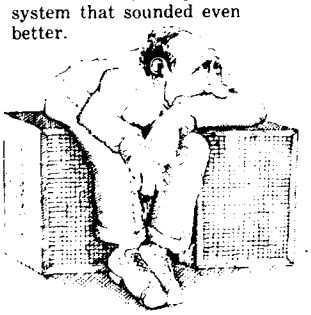

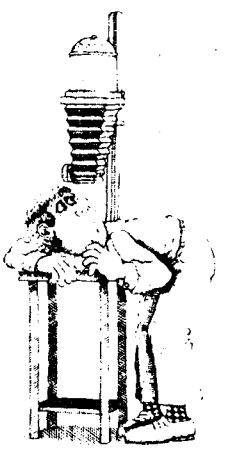

Irving I. really felt like a pro with his new $174.50 enlarger. When he started pricing *lenses* for it, he wept all over his darkroom for not knowing about a higher rated model he *could* have bought for $135 *complete*.

Johnny J. made up his mind that he'd never again spend his hard-earned money on power mowers with poorly-shielded blades, circular saws that jammed, caulking compounds that shrank and cracked, antenna amplifiers that didn't improve his TV picture, convertible sofas his wife couldn't open, clothes dryers that snagged the laundry, boats that capsized if they took on too much water, and products that just weren't worth the price.

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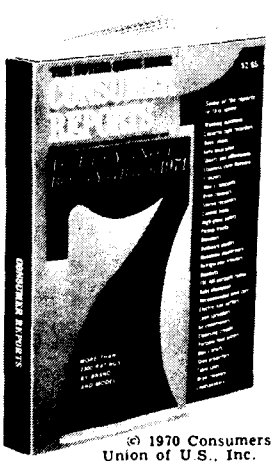

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